

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS COUNTY OF NEWPORT

The Town Council of the Town of Tiverton, County and State aforesaid held a Special Meeting on Thursday, the 11th day of December 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the Tiverton Town Hall, 343 Highland Road at 7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Council President deMedeiros, Vice President Chabot, Councilor Lambert, Councilor Mello, Councilor Pelletier, Councilor Perry and Councilor Sousa
Town Administrator Matthew Wojcik and Solicitor Teitz were also present.

1. Call To Order

Council President deMedeiros called the Council to order with a pledge of allegiance to the flag and roll call.

Town Administrator – Discussion on Fire Department Overtime

Administrator Wojcik addressed Council; a continuation from posted agenda of last meeting. Handed out memorandum outlining the systemic causes for the significant cost overrun in overtime. Helpful to go through mechanics and what drives this to occur. Chief compiled actual roaster data for Fire Dept from November 10 to November 30. Each day two shifts 10 and 14. Minimum manning requirement of 7 and we roaster 8. On each and every schedule if already know are at 7 due to man out on FMLA or injury you know anything that happens like sick or vacation will mandate overtime. Officer in charge will call to fill. When have 8 and know always missing 1 could still make minimum manning. Could have 12% absentee rate and still run without overtime. Our absentee rate is substantially higher than that and don't have the resources to backfill on straight time. During the period reviewed looked at 42 shifts times 8 yielding 336 paid slots. Minimum manning is to fill 294 of them. During that period 46 O/T slots paid out. 46 out of 294 filled at O/T. Base salary only paid for 405 slots to staff 294. Theoretically only 8 on roaster and only manning 7 paying for actually 10. Impact of IOD is more profound than report indicates. If every rotation you know 2 shifts have 2 men out on IOD needed O/T. Had 21 call in or vacation slots used where already had 2 out on IOD and 2 out on FMLA. One man on training and not always available for his shift. Effectively staffing with 26 men and not 32. Councilor deMedeiros questioned if someone is training on the 10 hr shift if training while they are working. Chief responded, one member a state certified instructor and is dedicated fully to training and off shift. Councilor deMedeiros asked why he can't train while on duty. Chief responded will delay getting the recruit ready. Training takes 12 to 14 weeks. Discussion relative to filling in slots of the officer that is training. Work 2/10 hour days, 2/14 hour nights, 4 days off. Shell game of shifting men. Also might be issue with use of sick time.

Town Administrator added if had use of floater would help over time. Have contract rules on transferring. Numbers break it down. Have 4 shifts which 2 are manned at 8. Councilor Pelletier questioned length of time the FMLA creates for hole. Chief responded it creates a shift at 7. Don't have long term range as of yet.

Councilor Sousa, talked about operation but would like to know how much spent on fire prevention and fire marshal office. Chief only spend 45K per year and that does not come out of O/T account.

Councilor Sousa report on page 62 stipulates if cannot improve this office we should turn back to State. Not a requirement of the Town, was supposed to save money for the Town. If not should move

away from fire department. Been out and spoke with businesses in Town and find other reasons why should turn back to State. Councilor deMedeiros suggests need to think about hiring full time fire marshal. Councilor Sousa reiterated we are not required to perform this function. Lot of other towns allow state fire marshal to do this, very costly. Easier to do on line and faster. There is a website where you can submit plan on line, better system than Town has and quicker. Told to him by business owners and Chamber of Commerce, issue we need to look at. Councilor deMedeiros could discuss at budget time but now at this point in critical shape with O/T. IF keep up pace need 400K. Need to do something drastic, close something, pull something out, something. Can listen to argument and presentations on that at budget time.

Councilor Sousa asked if stopped doing inspections today how much money would be saved. These ideas came up at budget time last year and were never acted on. Chief responded that the State charges much more than the Town and takes longer. Currently must go through the Fire Department, no option to go through State.

Councilor deMedeiros commented immediate concern is the Town Administrator will pay attention and try to stabilize this O/T. Currently only 22K , know will go in red in 2 weeks and questioned solution.

Town Administrator there is a probationary fire fighter that will be in service so should help with rotations. Over years many dept facing the same or similar problems and have taken steps unilaterally. Different communities treat minimum manning differently. You can take out a piece of equipment as they did in Woonsocket with the ladder truck. The men who manned it could be available and O/T resolved. However, violation of contract and settled the grievance in context of contract negotiation for bankrupt city. Not so in Tiverton. Need to be thoughtful on training for cost effectiveness. Need stricter sick time use and need to send message patterns of behavior of extensive use of sick time will trigger management response. Reached a point in understanding with the 2 IOD cases to hire 2 experienced fire fighters who will not need to be trained. Will be overstaffed at that point. But strong indication 2 in disability process and have professional opinions will not return to Tiverton Fire Dept. Union tentatively agreed to this. At decision point for Council. If it happens they would start as probationary with no seniority. Rough year in firefighting so might be people looking.

Main recommendation is to freeze spending and require approval before Administrator and the Council on 3 accounts of the Fire Dept; minor equipment and maintenance accounts. Need look where spending patterns did not meet the budget AFSCME position of Maintenance Foreman, Senior Center bus services.

Councilor deMedeiros since not up to full staff should have money in salary account. T/A responded there is some but not same degree had last year since filling with recruits. Chief suggests will get us through another month.

Councilor Perry questioned fire marshal balance 28,737 and personnel services for fire fighters balance 1,048,496. Chief quick estimate will be 16 or 17,000 in end. Councilor Perry should be fine in base salary.

Town Administrator added there are some discussions in collective bargaining with union and will be discussed in Executive Session. Councilor Pelletier questioned if have model outlines of expenditures or using best guess. T/A responded Executive Session all about the model and will be talking about solutions. Discussed sick time issue. Identified as structural problem of operations, questioned if abuses and how to identify and be in position to eliminate in future. T/A part of contract negotiations

and suggests compare sick time between Police Dept and Fire Dept. Police Department much more controlled. One or two individuals in Fire Dept are generating O/T every single shift.

In open session Councilor Lambert motioned to enter Executive Session under 42-46-5(a)(2) – Collective Bargaining IAFF and IBPO. Seconded by Councilor Pelletier, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Lambert motioned to remain in Executive Session under 42-46-5(a)(2) – Litigation – Sakonnet River Bridge Tolls. Seconded by Councilor Pelletier motion passed unanimously.

Council entered Executive Session at approximately 7:45 p.m.

CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 1. Town Administrator-42-46-5(a)(2)-Collective Bargaining IAFF and IBPO**
- 2. Town Solicitor – 42-46-5(a)(2) – Litigation – Sakonnet River Bridge Tolls**

Council returned to Open Session at approximately 9:20 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

Councilor deMedeiros announced no formal action taken on Collective Bargaining. Motion was taken relative to litigation on Sakonnet River Bridge Tolls not to join in Portsmouth's appeal of Court decision.

Councilor Mello motioned to seal the records, seconded by Councilor Perry. Motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilor Pelletier motioned, seconded by Councilor Perry to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:25 p.m.

A True Copy.

ATTEST:

Nancy L. Mello, Town Clerk